





NHDES
Wetland Program
Public Input Sessions
February – March
2018





Thank you

To all who assisted in the development of the draft rules, provided public comments, participated in workgroups and BMP review and revisions

Topics Outline

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Background on Wetland Rules Process Initiative
- 3. Roadmap to Rule Changes
- 4. Next steps
- 5. Public Questions & Comments



Wetlands Rules Public Input Sessions

Public Input Sessions

A significant, multi-year effort to improve the technical standards, operation, and decision-making processes used by the NHDES Wetlands Bureau.

Location	Address	Date and Time
Concord	29 Hazen Drive	February 26 th
NHDES Headquarters		6-8 pm
Auditorium		
NHDES Pease Field	222 International	February 28 th
Office – Room A	Drive, Suite 175	6-8 pm
Laconia City Hall	45 Beacon Street East	March 1 st
		6:30-8:30 pm
Keene Public Library	60 Winter Street	March 5 th
		6:30-8:30 pm
Lancaster, North	629B Main Street	March 15 th
Country Resource		5:30-7:30 pm
Center		

Wetlands Program Rulemaking Anticipated Schedule

Overall Schedule

February 2018 – April 20, 2018

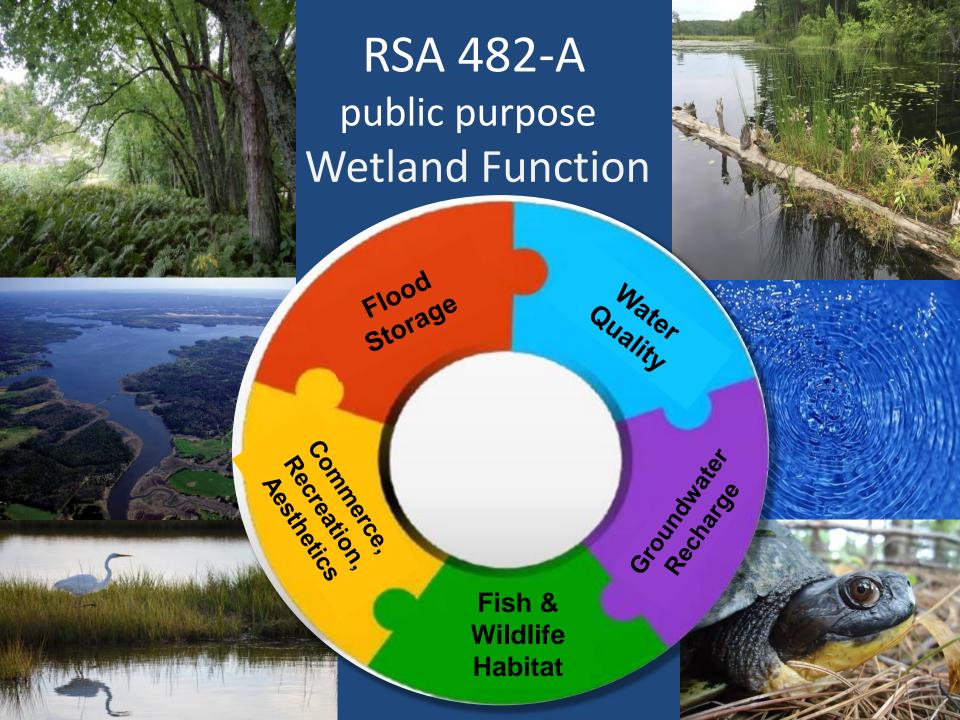
Public Input
Sessions &
Receive Public
Comments on
draft rules

We Are Here!

Spring to early summer 2018

NHDES review of comments to determine next steps

Goal: begin formal rulemaking process in 2018



NHDES Role

- ✓ Over 2,000 applications each year
- ✓ Wide range of applicants & activities
- Logger timber harvesting
- Landowner install a driveway
- Road agent fix a culvert
- Hikers create a new trail
- Lake-front owner install a dock
- Developer create or expand residential or commercial development
- ❖NHDOT widen a public highway

Striking the Right Balance

Protecting Natural Resources Supporting Economic Activity

Wetlands Program Rulemaking & Process Improvement Effort

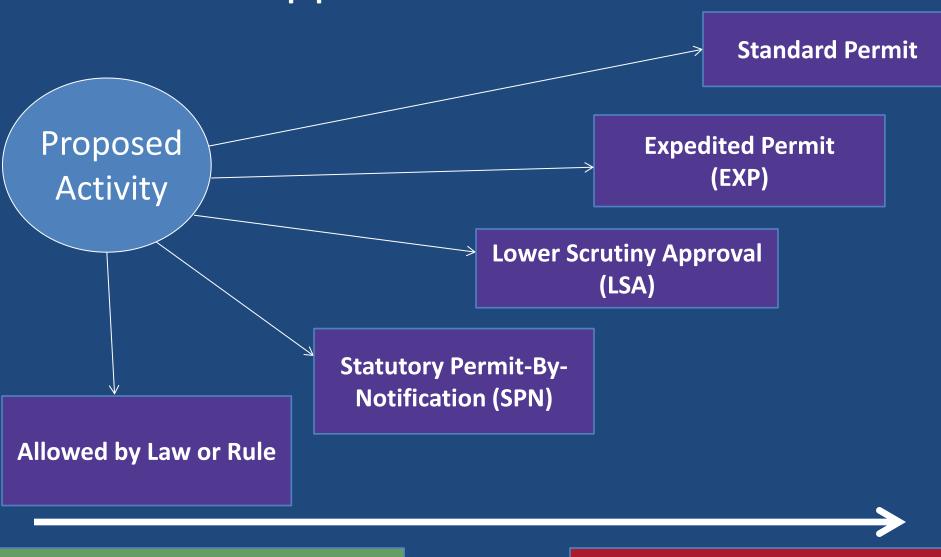
GOALS

- Enhance predictability and transparency
- Increase consistency and standardization
- Ensure scientifically-based decisions that are protective of New Hampshire's important natural resources

Levels of Review

- RSA 482-A establishes 6 levels of review:
 - Statutory Permit-By-Notification (SPN)
 - Lower Scrutiny Approval (LSA) 3 types:
 - 1. No contact with NHDES needed
 - 2. Registration required
 - 3. Permit-By-Notification
 - Expedited Permit (EXP)
 - Standard Permit

Approvals & Permits



Low Potential <u>Impact</u> to Aquatic Resources

Higher Potential <u>Impact</u> to Aquatic Resources

NHDES Research & Discussion

Studied Process

Mapped wetland review process

Mapped new regulatory approach

30 topics

Scientific
literature/
current
practice/other
states & federal

Proposals vetted in Confer as Bureau

Confer

Proposals vetted through management

Senior Rules Team (SRT) met monthly since 2013

Stakeholder Input

Listening sessions

Concepts floated at 30+ sessions

Received public comments

Partner meetings

Held 24 partner meetings

Received comments from state, federal and DES programs

Workgroup meetings

Held 24 meetings and 34 BMP meetings Tidal; Inland; Shoreline structures; Forestry; Utility; Routine Roadway

NHDES Review & Rules Drafting

Review of Comments

Compared comments w/ internal review

Identified common themes/issues

Program drafts

Vetted program drafts through SRT

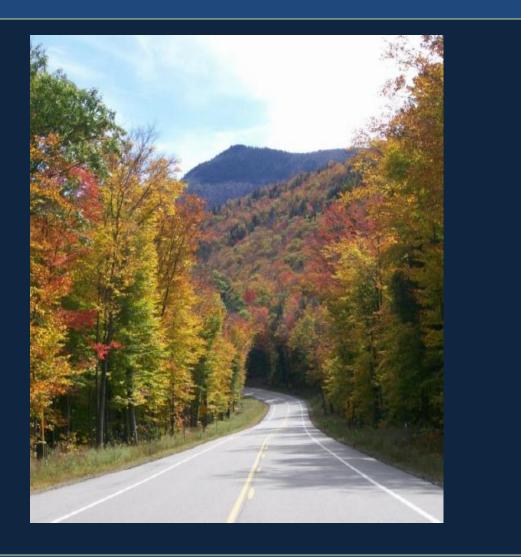
Responded to Legal Unit questions and comments

Legal Unit

Legal Unit redrafts and program discussions

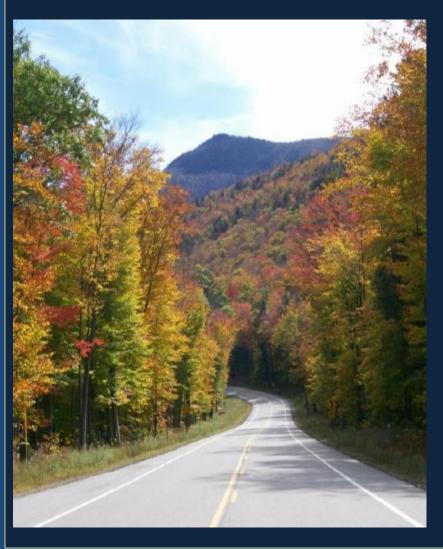
Final drafts distributed

Roadmap for Navigating the Proposed Rules



Goal: Increase Clarity

DEFINITIONS



102 - General

602 - Tidal

701 - Primes

902 - Stream Crossings

Key New definitions Env-Wt 100

- 102.12 "Avoidance"
- 102.24 102.26 "CAT1", "CAT2", "CAT 3"
- 102.37 "Datacheck tool"
- 102.56 "Expedited permit" (EXP)
- 102.82 "Lower scrutiny approval" (LSA)
- 103.05 "Minimization"
- 103.06 "Minimization measures"

"Avoidance" (Env-Wt 102.12)

"not impacting jurisdictional areas if there is a practicable alternative" (Also see 313.04)

"Minimization Measures" (Env-Wt 103.06) & new BMP

"design techniques that address unavoidable adverse impacts based on the scale, location, and design of the proposed project, the function and values of the impacted resources, and practicability."

Key New definitions Env-Wt 100

- 103.10 "Need" (Also see Env-Wt 313)
- 103.28 "Protected species or habitat"
- 103.29 "Public docking structure"
- 103.33 "Public trust surface waters"
- 103.37 "Rehabilitation"

"Need" 103.10 & 313.03 Standard permits

For standard permits, presumption of no need to impact:

- ✓ Tidal wetlands & waters
- ✓ Bog and freshwater marshes &
- ✓ Special resource areas

Unless by clear & convincing evidence—balancing alternatives, reasonable use & practicability, consistency with RSA 482-A:1

Key new definitions Env-Wt 100

- 103.54 "Significant function wetland"
- 103.54 "Special resource area"
- 103.59 "Standard permit"
- 103.68 "Top of bank"
- 103.74 "Water quality measures"

"Special Resource Area" 103.58

- Means a jurisdictional area that:
- (a) Is an Exemplary natural community (NHB)
- (b) Documented rare, protected species or habitat
- (c) Marsh with one acre or larger
- (d) Very poorly drained scrub shrub wetland
- (e) Peatlands or bog
- (f) Floodplain wetlands on alluvial very poorly drained soils
- (g) Designated Prime Wetlands
- (h) Sand dune, tidal wetland, tidal water or undeveloped TBZ
- (i) Tier 3 stream with cold water fishery
- (j) Combination of a i above

"Top of bank" (103.68)

"the first break in slope above the ordinary high water mark of a surface water or wetland, usually identified by physical characteristics such as a change in topography or a change in vegetation type."

"Water quality measures" (103.74)

"methods, practices, and devices that are designed and implemented to prevent or minimize erosion, siltation, or turbidity, or any combination thereof. The term includes but is not limited to phased construction, vegetated filter strips, geotextile silt fences, stormwater detention and infiltration systems, sediment detention basins, and other method, practice or device identified in Env-Wq 1506 – 1508."

Key New Tidal Definitions Env-Wt 602

- 602.01 "Accessory structure"
- 602.03 "Beach nourishment"
- 602.05 "Coastal erosion"
- 602.06 "Coastal functional assessment"
- 602.07 "Coastal hazards"
- 602.08 "Coastal lands"
- 602.10 "Developed upland" (REVISED)

Key New Tidal Definitions Env-Wt 602

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602.14 "Extraordinary seaweed event"
602.15 "Federal navigation project" (FNP)
602.21 "Impervious surface"
602.23 "In-fill lot"
602.25 "Landscaping"
602.26 "Line of encroachment"
602.28 "Natural condition"
```

Key New Tidal Definitions 602

- 602.33 "Qualified coastal professional"
- 602.35 "Seaweed removal season"
- 602.36 "Sequential dredging"
- 602.49 "Transient public use access points"
- 602.50 "Working waterfront"
- 602.51 "Unaltered state"

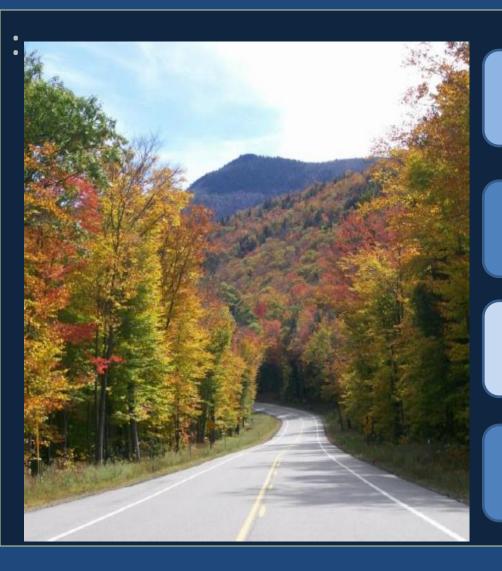
Key new Stream Crossing Definitions Env-Wt 900

- 902.03 "Bankfull depth"
- 902.07 "Connectivity" (Revised)
- 902.08 "Design Storm"
- 902.10 "Entrenchment ratio"
- 902.12 "Flood-prone width"
- 902.13 "Geomorphic compatibility"
- 902.15 "Hydraulic capacity"

Key new Stream Crossing Definitions Env-Wt 900

- 902.16 "Longitudinal profile"
- 902.20 "Reference reach"
- 902.21 "Rehabilitation"
- 902.22 "Repair"
- 902.24 "Replacement"
- 902.25 "Self-mitigating"
- 902.26 "Sinuosity"

Goal: Standardize Conditions to Protect ...



Water Quality 307.03

Fisheries & Breeding areas 307.04

Threatened/endangered species, critical habitat 307.06

Designated Prime Wetlands 307.08

Protect Water Quality 307.03

Surface Water Quality Standards

RSA 485-A, & A:8,- C

Env-Wq 1700



Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act

RSA 483-B

Env-Wq 1400



NH Stormwater Manual, Vol 3 (2008)

Silt controls Env-Wq 1506

Env-Wq 1508

Protect Fisheries & Breeding Areas 307.04

Avoid discharge in spawning or nursery areas

Time construction

To avoid spawning/ breeding impacts

Maintain cold water fisheries

Dissolved Oxygen Concentrations

Env-Wq 1703.07

Maintain temperatures - Env-Wq 1703.11

Protect high quality waters

Env-Wq 1708.06

Protect Rare, Threatened, Endangered Species & Critical Habitat 307.06

No impact to a threatened or endangered species, a proposed listing or proposed critical habitat

Federal Endangered Species Act

16 USC Sec 1531

State Endangered Species Conservation Act

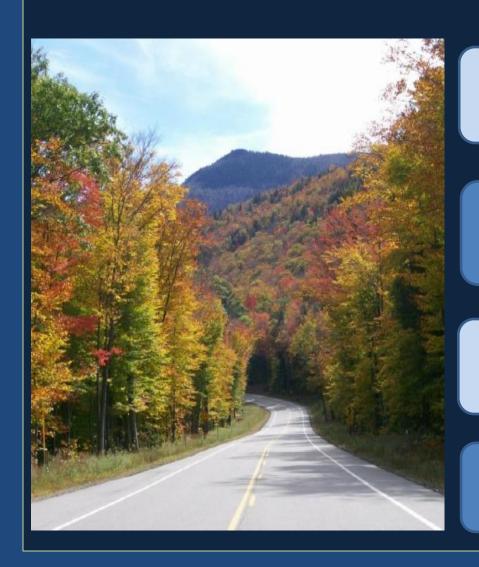
RSA 212-A

See data-check screening planning tool

NHB & Fish & Game & NHDES

for protected species & habitat

Goal: Streamline Processes



Statutory Permit by Notification (SPN) 308.04

Lower Scrutiny Approval (LSA) 309

Expedited Permit (EXP) 310

Standard Permit 311

Statutory Permit by Notification (SPN)

SPN

- Temporary Seasonal Dock
- Timber Harvesting (CAT1/low impact)

SPN

- Panning for gold or minerals
- Recreational Trails (CAT1/low impact)

SPN

- Utility maintenance & repair (CAT1)
- Routine Roadway up to 48" culvert

Lower Scrutiny Approvals (LSA)

LSA

- Work Authorized by Rule or Registration
- Routine Roadways beyond SPN

LSA

CAT 1 projects – low/minimum impact

LSA

- NHDES to process within 5 business days
- NHDES to post permit to One-Stop

Goal – Streamline Review



Conservation Commission

Review

NHDES technical review

NHDES review in 10 days

Proposed process

Submitted to Town Clerk No Conservation Commission review NHDES review in 5 work days

New Streamlined projects (CAT1)

LSA

Agriculture (≤ 3 acres)

LSA

< 3,000 SF driveway access</p>

LSA

Pond construction < 3 K SF

New Streamlined projects (CAT1)

LSA

< 10 cubic yard Beach-deck

LSA

 Vegetative & Bio-engineered Bank Stabilization < 50 LF

LSA

Boardwalk Construction < 3 K SF

New Streamlined projects (CAT1)

LSA

Tier 3 stream crossing repairs

RR-5

• In-kind headwall repair

RR-8

Culvert inlet/outlet Maintenance

New Streamlined Tidal projects (CAT1)

LŠA

• In-kind maintenance of Tidal shoreline stabilization projects

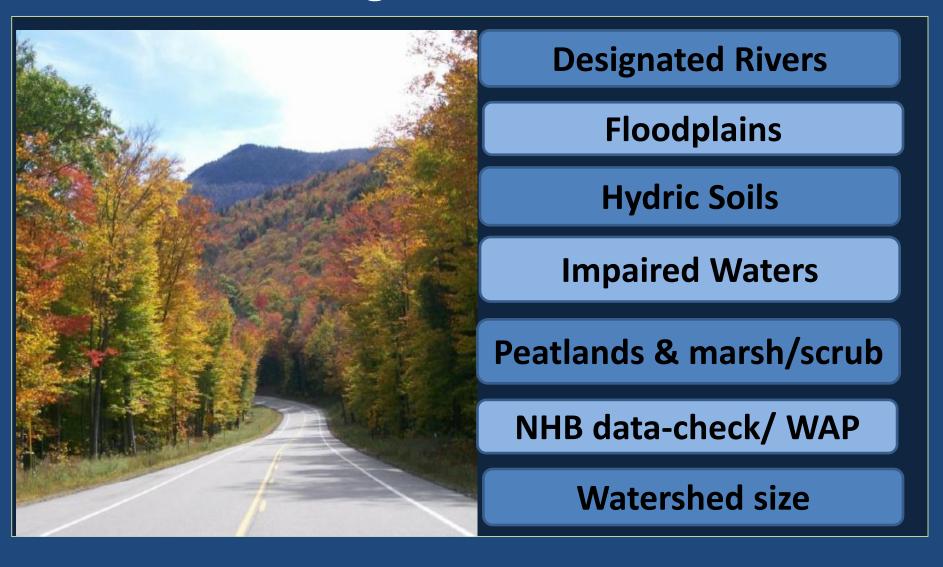
LSA

Sand Dune restoration projects

LSA

Structure construction in in-fill lots

Goal: Streamline Review Data Screening – 311, Standard Permit



Streamline Review

Current Standard Process

Application filed w/ Town Clerk & NHDES

NHDES- ARC

CC 14 day

LAC review

NHDES Technical review

NHDES issues decision

Proposed Process- CC & LAC pre-application consultation required to address any comments.

30 days prior to filing

Application filed w/ Town Clerk & NHDES

NHDES technical review

NHDES issues decision

Goal: Standardize Process Env-Wt 300 rules



Functional Assessment (311.10)

Application Amendment (311.13)

Completeness (312.02)

Evaluation Criteria (313.01)

Demonstration of Need (313.03)

Extensions, Transfers (314.05-.06)

Permit Amendment (314.07)

Emergencies (315)

Standard Evaluation Criteria 313

- Demonstrate need (313.03)
- Avoid, minimize, mitigate (313.03)
- Acknowledge standard conditions (307)
- Resource-specific criteria met
- Project-specific criteria met (500, 600, 900)
- No adverse impact on abutting property (RSA 482-A:11, II)

Env-Wt 313.04 A/M/Mitigation

 Sequencing of avoidance, minimization, & mitigation clarified

Impacts to special resource areas require mitigation

Standard Application Evaluation 313.05 (new criteria or amended listed)

- Displacement of floodwaters from floodplain wetlands or other areas known to flood onto adjacent properties
- Whether the project proposes stormwater treatment or detention in wetlands or surface waters or would contribute additional loading to impaired waters such that the surface water quality standards in RSA 485-A or Env-Wq 1700 would not be met
- Whether project is designed to maintain or enhance wetland & stream hydrological connectivity, aquatic organism passage, & plant community features necessary to retain or restore wetlands and aquatic resource functions

Goal: Standardize Delineation & Classification



Wetland Delineation & Classification 406

Basis for Project Classification 407

Resource Disqualifications 407.02

Size Thresholds

407.03

Project Type Exceptions 407.04

Projects in Special Resources 408

Delineation Boundary & Plans



406.01 Delineation plan validity

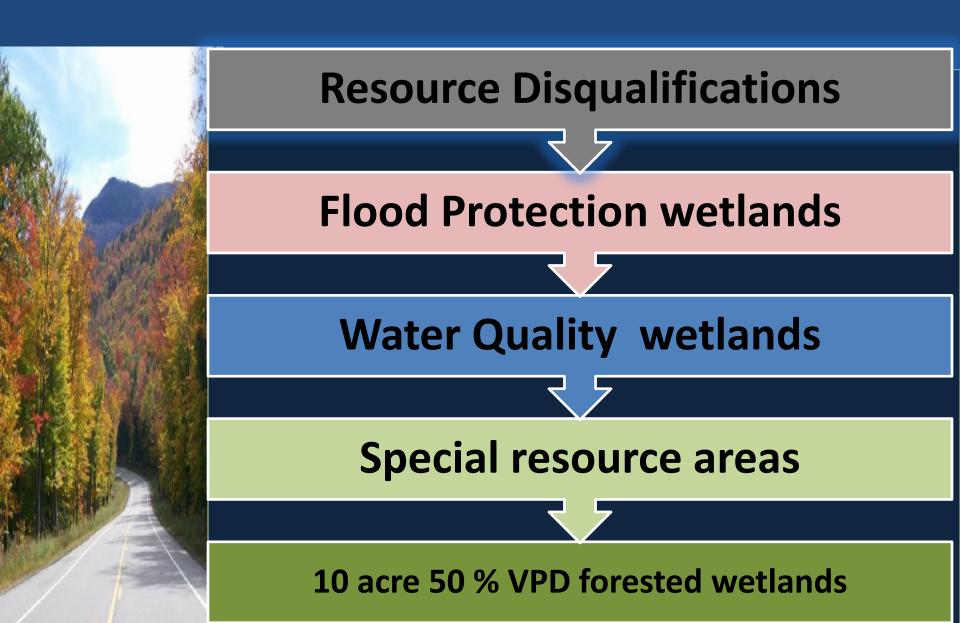
406.02 Boundary references updated

406.03 Delineation exemptions

406.04 Delineation of streams

406.06 Classifications updated

Basis for Project Classification



Project Classification



Resource Disqualifications

Size Thresholds

Project Type Exceptions

Project-Oriented standards

- Nontidal Projects Env-Wt 500
- Tidal projects Env-Wt 600
- Stream Crossings Env-Wt 900

Goal – Standardize plans & increase objectivity in reviews

Standardize plan requirements

Delineation methods

Assessment methods

Resource specific analysis

Non-tidal wetlands & streams

Coastal resources

Project specific criteria

Information required
Approval Criteria

Design Criteria & project classification

Goal: Standardize Criteria Project-Specific Criteria, Env-Wt 500



Beach/Deck 511

Breakwaters 512

Docks 513; 514; 515

Bank Stabilization 516-518

Boathouses 519

Boat Launches 522

Significant Changes to Shoreline Structures

- Dock rules are no longer one size fits all.
 - Separate standards for Single Family Residential as opposed to Commercial, Public, and Marina structures.
- Approvable water access structures have been expanded to <u>allow</u> decks. No longer limited to just beaches and stairs.



Docking Structures Changes – Single family residential Env-Wt 513 and 515

Dock size is still linked to amount of frontage but:

- Baseline frontage amount is reduced from <u>75 to 50 feet</u>.
- Dock size based square feet of structure surface allowed / feet of frontage instead of # of slips / feet of frontage.
- Maximum dock width increased from 6 feet to 8 feet.
- Minimum dock width set at 4 feet.
- More flexibility on configuration.

Docking Structures Changes – Commercial, Public, and Marinas Env-Wt 514 and 515

- May still need to be based upon slips based criteria
- Seeking input on the feasibility of permitting size based on square feet of dock area to frontage ratios
- Seeking input on maximum incursion into public waters that should be allowed.

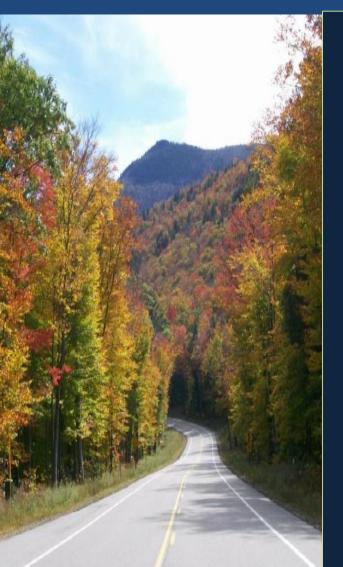
Water Access Structures Env-Wt 511

- Allow deck construction as an alternative to beach construction
 - Lower cost and impact
- Fully incorporates existing Shoreland Protection accessory structure requirements
 - Slope criteria already applied. Size criteria to be added.

Shoreland Accessory Structure rulemaking is necessary

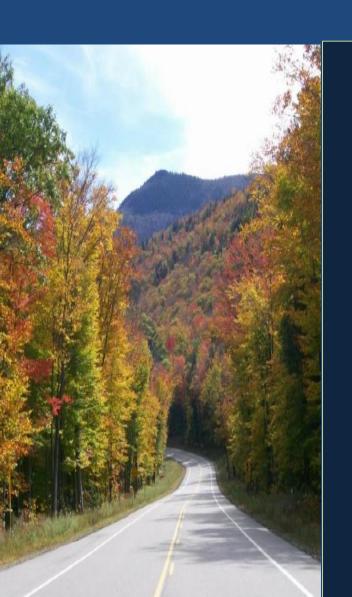
Suggestions on new Shoreland Accessory structure area to linear feet of frontage ratio would be appreciated.

Goal: Standardize Project Criteria



Ponds 523 Forestry 524 **Utility 525 Agriculture 526 Trails & Paths 527** Residential/Commercial **529 Restoration/Enhancement 530**

Goal: Consolidate Tidal Requirements



Data screen/assessment/plan 603

Demonstrated Need 604

Avoid/Minimization/Mitigation 605

Overwater Structures 607

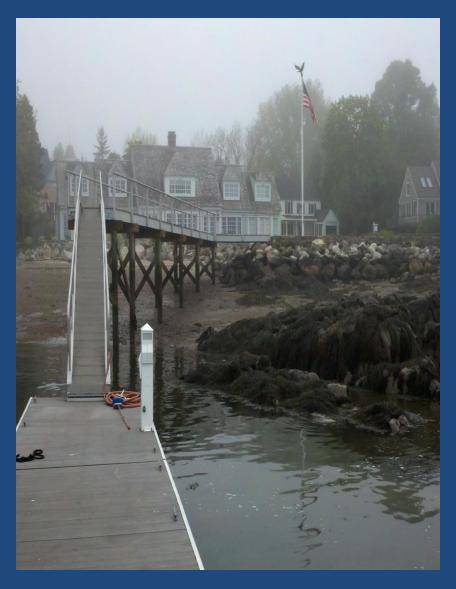
Dredge 608 Tidal beach 609

Tidal buffer zone/Shoreland 611

Env-Wt 600 Demonstration of Need Tidal Waters & Wetlands

- Optimize tidal wetland function & selfsustaining stability to storm surge
- Be designed & intended to protect upland infrastructure from coastal hazards
- Be limited to public infrastructure or restoration projects in the public interest

NEW - OVERWATER STRUCTURES - 607



Tidal Docks

Designed to avoid and minimize natural resources as identified in the coastal function assessment (CFA)

(Essential Fish Habitat, Shellfish & Eelgrass bed)

TYPES

- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL

NEW - TIDAL DREDGING - 608





- Pre-application meeting required for dredge projects
- ❖ No Dredging allowed in High Resource Value areas

Standard Applicability:

- ✓ Federal Navigation Project (FNP)
- ✓ Commercial / Industrial
- ✓ To remediate contaminated sites
- ✓ Maintenance of intake/outflow infrastructure
- ✓ In direct interest of commerce for well-being of general public

See New Tidal mitigation rule

<u>Table 605-1: Preferred Forms of Compensatory</u> <u>Mitigation for Projects in Coastal Areas</u>

Type of Project	Preferred Forms of Compensatory Mitigation
Overwater Structures >2,000 SF total coverage	Permittee-responsible mitigation
Dredge - new tidal dredge or FNP expansion	Permittee-responsible mitigation
Tidal Buffer Zone (TBZ) - undeveloped lots - developed upland lot, in-fill lot if any impacts within 75 feet of a salt marsh - impacts >10,000 SF in developed TBZ not adjacent to salt marsh	Permittee-responsible on-site mitigation
Sand Dunes	Permittee responsible on-site mitigation

Goal: Reflect Statutory Changes Env-Wt 700 Prime Wetlands



Definitions	701
Criteria/ Procedures	702
Maps & documents	703
Criteria for approval	704
Notice & appeal	705
Prime Wetland Waivers	706

Statutory History of Prime Wetlands – Table 701-1

Session Law	Effective Date	Statutory Parameters
1979, 431:5-6	Aug. 22, 1979	 Municipalities authorized to designate prime wetlands NH Wetlands Board must notify local authority prior to issuing a permit for a project "in or adjacent to" designated prime wetlands Board adopts rules to implement, establish criteria (OLS document #1825, eff. 10-5-81; see OLS Revision Notes for subsequent history) No fixed buffers for prime wetlands, but rules establish requirements that apply to proposed work/activities that may impact prime wetlands, including no significant net loss of wetland function "Adjacent" not defined
2007, 211, 2 2009, 185:2	Aug. 24, 2007 Sept. 11, 2009	 "in or adjacent to" changed to "in or within 100 feet of" Department must notify local authority prior to issuing a permit for projects "in or within 100 feet of" a designated prime wetlands Waivers authorized for forest management work
2012, 235:2	Aug. 17, 2012	 Requirements established for a prime wetlands to be at least 2 acres in size; to not consist of a water body only; to have at least 4 primary wetland functions, one of which must be wildlife habitat; and to be at least 50 feet wide at its narrowest point Department must notify local authority prior to issuing a permit for projects in a designated prime wetlands or within 100 feet of any prime wetland where a 100 foot buffer was required at the time of designation (i.e., on or after Sept. 11, 2009 but before Aug. 17, 2012)

New: Prime Wetlands Waivers

PART Env-Wt 706 WAIVERS FOR ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH
PRIME WETLANDS/BUFFERS
Env-Wt 706.01 Availability of Waivers for Forestry Activities
Env-Wt 706.02 Requirements for Waiver Requests for Forestry

Env-Wt 706.03 Issuance of Waivers for Forestry Activities

Env-Wt 706.04 Availability of Waivers for Other Activities in Duly-Established 100-Foot Buffers

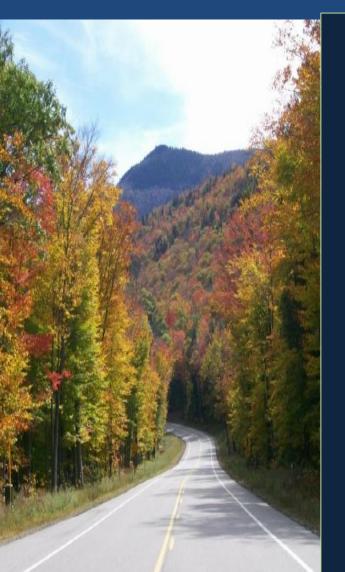
Env-Wt 706.05 Requirements for Waiver Requests for Other Activities in Buffers

Env-Wt 706.06 Issuance of Waivers for Other Activities in Prime Wetlands Buffers

Env-Wt 706.07 Waiver Term; Extensions

Activities

Goal: Clarify & Streamline Env-Wt 900 Stream Crossing rules



Project classification 903.02

Info Required 903.04-.06

Tier 4 - Tidal crossings 904.06

Repair, Rehabilitation, Replacement 904.08-.09

Alternative Design 904.10

Stream Crossing Classification

Type of Surface Water	Size of Contributing Watershed	Other Factors	Tier	Compensatory Mitigation Required?
Non-tidal	≤ 200 acres	None	1	No
Non-tidal	> 200 acres but < 640 acres	None	2	No, unless alternative design or waiver of criteria
Non-tidal	≥ 640 acres	None	3	Yes, unless self- mitigating
Non-tidal	All	Within designated river corridor Within 100-year flood plain Within fluvial erosion zone	3	Yes, at least for impacts to resources other than stream
Tidal	All	None	4	Yes, unless self- mitigating

Stream Crossing Project Classifications

Project Classification →	Low Impact / CAT1	Minor / CAT2	Major / CAT3
Size of impact	< 50 linear feet (LF) EXCEPT Repair of existing legal structures with no waivers can be ≥ 50 LF	Single crossing or multiple crossings with total impact of ≥ 50 LF but < 200 LF	Single crossing or multiple crossings with total impact of ≥ 200 LF or classified as major based on resource
Type of Project ↓			
New Crossing	Tier 1 with no waivers	Tier 1 with waivers/ alternate design; Tier 2 with no waivers	All other new crossings
Repair	Tier 1 or Tier 2 with no waivers to 904.08; Tier 3 with no waivers to 904.09	Tier 1 or Tier 2 repairs needing waiver(s) to 904.08; Tier 4 that meets 904.09	All other repairs
Replacement	Tier 1 with no waivers to 904.08	Tier 2 with no waivers to 904.08	All other replacements
Rehabilitation	none	Tier 1 or Tier 2 with no waivers to 904.08	All other rehabilitations
Temporary Crossing	Tier 1 or Tier 2 with no waivers	none	All other temporary crossings

Hydraulic Capacity Report - 903.07

Hydraulic capacity report required if:

- Application for a standard permit for a stream crossing requires plans stamped by a P.E.

and

 Existing stream crossing structure cannot convey the design storm flow

Report must include drainage calculations and a narrative to demonstrate that the proposed stream crossing has sufficient hydraulic capacity to meet the applicable design standard.

Self-Mitigating Stream Crossings

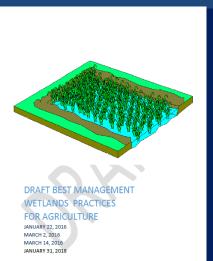
Design of the stream crossing incorporates measures or features to offset the loss of the affected resource's functions and values in an area where the new functions and values are sustainable.

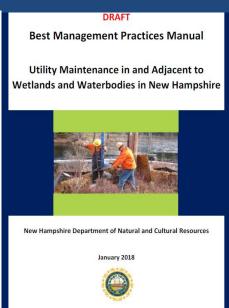
Examples of self-mitigating measures or features include, but are not limited to:

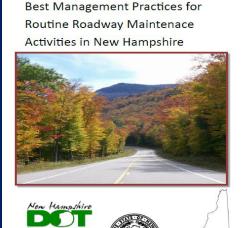
- Eliminating a barrier to aquatic organism passage
- Improving the hydraulic capacity of an under-sized crossing
- Improving geomorphic compatibility.

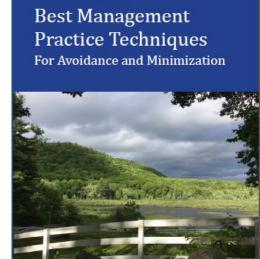
Check out the new BMPs

- Agriculture Dept of Agriculture
- Utility NHDES w/ Utility Workgroup
- Routine Roadway NHDOT
- Avoidance & Minimization Techniques









Wetlands

BMP Review

- All NEW <u>Avoidance & Minimization BMP</u> and review Project chapters http://neiwpcc.org/2018/01/31/nh-des-seeking-public-input-wetlands-best-management/
- See new <u>Planning and nutrient management sections</u> in Agriculture BMP manual.
 https://www.agriculture.nh.gov/publications-forms/documents/draft-wetland-bmp.pdf
- DOT Routine Roadway manual (See new activities & proposed new forms)
 https://www.nh.gov/dot/org/projectdevelopment/environment/units/program-management/documents/Draft V.3.pdf
- See new plans, BMPs, & photos in <u>Utility manual</u>
 <u>http://www.nhdfl.org/library/pdf/Planning/Utility%20BMP%</u>

 20Manual%20Draft%20 012618.pdf

Where do we go from here?

NHDES needs your feedback

Comment deadline – April 20, 2018

Written comments are encouraged

Next steps – to be determined based on comments

Any Comments? Submit anonymously at:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/draft-wetlands-rules

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